

We are currently in the midst of [Medicare's Open Enrollment season](#) , which ends earlier than normal this year on December 7. Every fall, the Open Enrollment period gives Medicare beneficiaries the opportunity to compare plans and make changes to their coverage for the upcoming calendar year.

Thanks to the Affordable Care Act, Medicare enrollees have more choices and benefits than ever. The health care law provides free annual wellness visits and preventive care services to many Medicare enrollees. And, it is working to close the Medicare Part D coverage gap and lower prescription drug costs. Because of these changes, it is more important than ever that you take some time to review your Medicare plan.

In order to help you [make the best choices for you](#) , Medicare has introduced a five-star rating system that ranks the privately run Advantage plans on preventive care, managing chronic conditions, customer service, pharmacy services, and overall satisfaction. Not only will the new star rating system help you make decisions about your health plans, it is also motivating health care providers to improve their care and service in order to earn a higher rating. You can visit [Medicare's Plan Finder](#) to see these ratings and review your options.

I hope that you will take advantage of the Open Enrollment period to ensure that you are getting the best care for your needs. For answers to your personal Medicare questions, you can visit [www.medicare.gov](http://www.medicare.gov) , call 1-800-MEDICARE, or consult with a local [State Health Insurance Assistance Program](#) . Additional helpful information can be found in the [2012 Medicare & You handbook](#) . And, as always, please feel free to call my office at (916) 498-5600.